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County Employment and Wages in Pennsylvania – First Quarter 2016

Washington County had second-largest wage decline among nation's largest counties

Employment rose in 17 of the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania from March 2015 to March 2016, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2015 annual average employment.) Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that Northampton County's 3.1 percent rate of employment growth was the fastest in Pennsylvania and ranked 78th among the 344 largest counties nationwide. Lancaster County followed with an employment increase of 2.7 percent, ranking 109th among the nation's large counties. Washington and Erie Counties had the only employment declines among Pennsylvania's large counties, down 2.5 and 1.4 percent, respectively.

Nationally, employment grew 2.0 percent during this 12-month period, as 318 of the 344 large counties nationwide gained jobs. Williamson County, Tenn., had the largest percentage increase in employment, up 7.9 percent over the year. Midland County, Texas, had the largest employment decrease with a loss of 9.0 percent.

Among the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, employment was highest in Allegheny County (678,100) in March 2016. One other county, Philadelphia, had employment above 600,000. Together, Pennsylvania's 19 large counties accounted for 77.0 percent of total employment within the commonwealth. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.6 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Washington County declined 12.0 percent from the first quarter of 2015 to the first quarter of 2016—the largest wage decrease among Pennsylvania's largest counties and ranked 2nd in wage decline among the large counties nationwide. Thirteen large counties in Pennsylvania had wage decreases ranging from 6.2 percent in Allegheny to 0.1 percent in Bucks, Erie, and Northampton counties. Two counties—Lackawanna and Lehigh—had unchanged average weekly wages over the year. The remaining three large counties had wage increases from 0.1 percent (Westmoreland) to 1.1 percent (Lancaster). (See [table 1.](#)) Nationally, the average weekly wage decreased 0.5 percent over the year to \$1,043 in the first quarter of 2016.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000. Forty-seven of these smaller counties had weekly wages below the national average. (See [table 2.](#))

Large county wage changes

Nine of Pennsylvania's 19 large counties had over-the-year wage decreases greater than the national decline of 0.5 percent in the first quarter of 2016. Three counties had wage growth and ranked in the top half among the 344 large counties nationwide.

Among the nation's largest counties, 164 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 15.5 percent from the first quarter of 2015. King, Wash., was second with a gain of 5.1 percent.

Nationwide, 167 large counties had decreases in average weekly wages over the year. McLean, Ill., had the largest decrease in wages with a decline of 13.3 percent from the first quarter of 2015. Washington, Pa., had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages (-12.0 percent), followed by Lafayette, La. (-10.3 percent); Mercer, N.J. (-8.5 percent); and Williamson, Texas (-7.8 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

The average weekly wage in one of Pennsylvania's large counties, Montgomery, ranked 22nd in the nation while Chester and Philadelphia also ranked in the top 50 nationwide. In addition to these counties, Allegheny, Delaware, and Washington also had wages above the U.S. average of \$1,043.

Five large counties in the Commonwealth had average weekly wages that placed in the bottom fourth of the national ranking—Lackawanna, Erie, Luzerne, Westmoreland, and Lancaster. Wages in these counties were more than 20 percent below the national average for the first quarter of 2016.

Average weekly wages in Pennsylvania's smaller counties

Forty-seven of the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$1,043. The exception was Montour County with wages of \$1,247. Perry had the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties, averaging \$569 in the first quarter of 2016. (See [table 2.](#))

When all 67 counties in Pennsylvania were considered, 60 had wages below the national average of \$1,043. Twenty-two reported wages below \$700, 24 had wages from \$701 to \$800, 8 had wages from \$801 to \$900, 5 had wages from \$901 to \$1,000, and 8 had wages above \$1,000. (See [chart 1.](#)) Four of the seven counties with wages above the national average of \$1,043 were concentrated in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, and two were located in the Pittsburgh area.

Additional statistics and other information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3.](#) For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the Technical Note or visit the QCEW Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2014 edition of this publication is now available and contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2015 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2014 are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn14.htm. The 2015 edition of Employment and Wages Annual Online will be available in September 2016.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.7 million employer reports cover 140.1 million full- and part-

time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/

; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2016

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	March 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2015-16 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, first quarter 2015-16 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	140,070.80	2.0	--	\$1,043	--	-0.5	--
Pennsylvania	5,662.20	1.1	--	1,012	16	-1.9	42
Allegheny, Pa.....	678.1	0.4	306	1,128	63	-6.2	337
Berks, Pa.....	169.4	1.5	224	878	203	-0.5	207
Bucks, Pa.....	255.3	1.9	176	929	162	-0.1	177
Butler, Pa.....	84.0	1.5	224	902	180	-1.8	260
Chester, Pa.....	244.9	1.8	192	1,343	28	-2.5	293
Cumberland, Pa.....	130.2	2.2	150	907	175	-0.7	216
Dauphin, Pa.....	177.2	1.4	235	984	133	-4.7	329
Delaware, Pa.....	216.9	1.3	242	1,117	67	-1.3	239
Erie, Pa.....	121.0	-1.4	334	769	308	-0.1	177
Lackawanna, Pa.....	96.3	0.6	295	751	316	0.0	165
Lancaster, Pa.....	230.3	2.7	109	823	263	1.1	88
Lehigh, Pa.....	183.0	2.3	142	1,004	118	0.0	165
Luzerne, Pa.....	142.1	1.3	242	772	304	-2.4	287
Montgomery, Pa.....	477.3	2.1	158	1,371	22	-0.3	191
Northampton, Pa.....	109.1	3.1	78	881	199	-0.1	177
Philadelphia, Pa.....	654.2	1.5	224	1,206	47	-1.7	254
Washington, Pa.....	84.4	-2.5	338	1,066	82	-12.0	342
Westmoreland, Pa.....	131.3	1.0	263	791	292	0.1	155
York, Pa.....	174.7	1.6	211	862	215	0.8	108

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2016

Area	Employment March 2016	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
United States ⁽²⁾	140,070,814	\$1,043
Pennsylvania	5,662,249	1012
Adams	34,032	705
Allegheny	678,125	1,128
Armstrong	16,253	711
Beaver	50,929	798
Bedford	15,066	627
Berks	169,420	878
Blair	57,879	705
Bradford	23,063	781
Bucks	255,333	929
Butler	83,965	902
Cambria	52,066	679
Cameron	1,933	707
Carbon	16,971	628
Centre	67,467	876
Chester	244,927	1,343
Clarion	13,333	621
Clearfield	29,280	676
Clinton	12,941	753
Columbia	24,810	698
Crawford	30,470	690
Cumberland	130,195	907
Dauphin	177,216	984
Delaware	216,949	1,117
Elk	14,880	764
Erie	120,963	769
Fayette	38,688	659
Forest	1,961	828
Franklin	58,167	735
Fulton	4,906	763
Greene	13,015	928
Huntingdon	12,049	681
Indiana	30,220	796
Jefferson	15,165	688
Juniata	6,375	628
Lackawanna	96,295	751
Lancaster	230,313	823
Lawrence	27,714	699
Lebanon	48,724	752
Lehigh	183,042	1,004
Luzerne	142,070	772
Lycoming	50,774	753
McKean	15,121	762
Mercer	46,629	726
Mifflin	15,430	674
Monroe	55,084	800
Montgomery	477,314	1,371
Montour	15,345	1,247
Northampton	109,062	881
Northumberland	26,596	708
Perry	7,791	569
Philadelphia	654,221	1,206
Pike	10,487	607
Potter	5,164	729
Schuylkill	49,303	717

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2016 - Continued

Area	Employment March 2016	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
Snyder	15,882	604
Somerset	23,481	672
Sullivan	1,579	602
Susquehanna	9,040	685
Tioga	12,628	708
Union	17,144	798
Venango	18,129	668
Warren	14,646	695
Washington	84,401	1,066
Wayne	13,954	696
Westmoreland	131,306	791
Wyoming	9,590	838
York	174,744	862

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

NOTE: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2016

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	March 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	140,070.8	2.0	1043	--	-0.5	--
Alabama	1,902.6	1.6	842	37	-0.2	22
Alaska	317.6	-1.4	1028	15	-2	43
Arizona	2,679.8	2.8	918	23	-0.8	30
Arkansas	1,191.1	2.1	793	45	0.5	13
California	16,455.5	2.6	1206	6	0	20
Colorado	2,514.6	2.4	1057	13	-1.3	36
Connecticut	1,650.6	0.6	1362	3	-1.4	38
Delaware	429.7	1.5	1072	10	-3	48
District of Columbia	749.6	2.0	1766	1	0.4	14
Florida	8,301.8	3.5	887	27	0.2	18
Georgia	4,215.1	3.0	1008	17	1.9	2
Hawaii	645.1	1.4	896	26	1.7	3
Idaho	670.4	3.5	725	50	-1.5	39
Illinois	5,800.6	1.2	1126	7	-0.5	28
Indiana	2,949.5	1.9	853	33	-0.5	28
Iowa	1,518.2	0.9	844	36	-0.4	27
Kansas	1,362.3	0.4	833	38	-2	43
Kentucky	1,843.9	1.9	823	41	0.1	19
Louisiana	1,910.5	-0.8	860	32	-2.6	47
Maine	580.5	1.8	804	44	1.1	8
Maryland	2,591.7	1.9	1103	9	-0.8	30
Massachusetts	3,414.8	2.1	1327	4	-1	33
Michigan	4,163.7	2.1	976	20	0.7	11
Minnesota	2,750.1	1.5	1065	12	-1.2	34
Mississippi	1,121.0	1.7	713	51	0.4	14
Missouri	2,729.5	1.9	879	29	-0.3	25
Montana	447.8	1.8	751	49	0.3	16
Nebraska	956.6	1.4	817	42	0	20
Nevada	1,264.1	3.0	875	30	1.2	5
New Hampshire	635.1	1.9	998	18	1.6	4
New Jersey	3,909.7	2.4	1268	5	-1.7	41
New Mexico	800.4	0.0	792	46	-1.6	40
New York	9,042.2	2.0	1456	2	-0.3	25
North Carolina	4,220.3	3.0	928	22	-0.2	22
North Dakota	409.4	-6.2	908	25	-7.6	51
Ohio	5,236.2	1.8	913	24	-0.8	30
Oklahoma	1,578.6	-0.9	833	38	-4.1	49
Oregon	1,808.2	3.2	929	21	1.2	5
Pennsylvania	5,662.2	1.1	1012	16	-1.9	42
Rhode Island	464.6	1.9	985	19	-2.2	46
South Carolina	1,974.6	2.7	806	43	0.8	10
South Dakota	410.5	0.9	771	48	1.2	5
Tennessee	2,859.2	3.3	887	27	0.3	16
Texas	11,638.7	0.7	1066	11	-2.1	45
Utah	1,369.2	3.8	849	35	0.6	12
Vermont	304.6	0.1	832	40	1	9
Virginia	3,748.1	2.6	1057	13	-1.2	34
Washington	3,147.7	3.1	1121	8	3	1
West Virginia	683.9	-1.2	782	47	-1.3	36
Wisconsin	2,771.4	1.3	875	30	-0.2	22
Wyoming	267.9	-3.7	850	34	-4.7	50
Puerto Rico	895.2	-1.2	520	(3)	-0.4	(3)
Virgin Islands	38.6	0.4	769	(3)	2.9	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

